

**Third Review Conference of the States Parties to
the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use,
Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of
Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

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Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**Informal presentation of requests submitted under Article 5
and of the analyses of these requests**

**Request for an extension of the deadline for completing the
destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with
Article 5 of the Convention**
Executive summary

Submitted by Zimbabwe

1. At independence in 1980, Zimbabwe inherited six distinct major mined areas that had been laid by the Rhodesian Army along its borders with Zambia and Mozambique respectively. The original contamination covered a total of 310.65 square kilometres which was erroneously reported as 511.05 square kilometres in previous extension requests. It is estimated that these areas contained over 2,605,400 anti-personnel mines and that there were and are three different types of minefields as follows:

(a) **Cordon Sanitaire:** The cordon sanitaire barrier generally consists of three rows of sub-surface anti-personnel mines laid in a standard pattern with a width of 25 metres. This type of minefield was laid close to or on the international border.

(b) **Ploughshear Minefield:** The Ploughshear minefield consists essentially of three rows of Ploughshear directional fragmentation mines mounted on 0.5 to one metre high stakes protected by sub-surface anti-personnel mines. This minefield has a depth of up to 400 metres.

(c) **Reinforced Ploughshear Minefield:** The reinforced Ploughshear minefield is essentially six rows of Ploughshear directional fragmentation mines mounted on 0.5 to one metre high stakes protected by sub-surface anti-personnel mines. Similar to the Ploughshear minefield, the reinforced has a depth of up to 400 metres.

2. These mined areas have had a severe socio-economic impact on Zimbabwean rural communities. They have severely affected the rural populace in the affected areas as livestock have been and continue to be killed by mines. Mines also continue to injure or in extreme cases kill humans. What is clear, however, is that the population that is at most risk from landmines includes poor rural subsistent farmers, who are often forced through economic necessities to take risks. While the number of casualties reported is relatively low, the real numbers are likely to be much higher. New reports have surfaced in the last months as partner organizations have deployed to the field compiling the victims' database

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during their day to day operations. The greatest impact on the population has proven to be on the Musengezi to Rwenya and the Sango Border Post to Crooks Corner minefields.

3. Unfortunately, perimeter fences that ensured effective exclusion of civilians from mined areas have been removed and vandalised by locals for domestic use during early 1980s. Owing to prohibitive costs and lack of sustainable measures to secure the perimeter fence from theft, no replacement has been placed but danger warning signs have been put in place.

4. In order to respond to the contamination of mines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW), in 2000 the Government of Zimbabwe established the National Mine Action Authority of Zimbabwe (NAMAAG) to regulate all mine action activities in Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Mine Action Centre (ZIMAC) to plan and coordinate mine action activities.

5. Clearance of the minefields started soon after independence, with priority being given to clearing small gaps in order to facilitate infrastructure development, resettlement and economic development. Major clearance started in 1998, with the United States of America providing material and training assistance to the Zimbabwe National Army Engineers to clear the Victoria Falls to Mlibizi minefield. This support was discontinued after one and half years leaving Zimbabwe to complete the bulk of the clearance of the 88 square kilometre minefield on its own in 2005. Further financial assistance was provided by the European Union between 1999 and 2000 to demine the 141.68 square kilometres Musengezi to Rwenya minefield. This support was withdrawn when only 6.2 square kilometres had been cleared. Since then, there has been no International financial assistance provided to Zimbabwe to clear its mined areas. Zimbabwe has been doing everything possible within its capacity to rid itself of anti-personnel mines in compliance with the Convention.

6. Zimbabwe's initial ten year deadline for fulfilling its mine clearance obligations under the Convention for the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction expired in March 2009. Zimbabwe requested an extension of 22 months in order to carry out survey work to acquire a more accurate representation of the dimensions of mined areas that need to be addressed and present a new extension request with a detailed work plan to clear these areas. This extension was granted in 2008 at the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties. As a basis in this initial request, Zimbabwe had inaccurately assumed that the minefields were 1.3 kilometre deep and, therefore arrived at an exaggerated total area to be addressed.

7. During the 22 months granted to Zimbabwe, ZIMAC, with support provided through the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit (ISU) undertook a more detailed analysis using core data from sources that included the 1994 MineTech Survey Report, a 2000 Koch – Mine Safe Completion Report, a 2010 HALO Trust Border Minefield Survey Report done for the Government of Mozambique and significant experience and knowledge gained by Zimbabwe's National Mine Clearance Unit from more than 13 years of clearance.

8. This analysis revealed that contamination data available on the mined areas of Musengezi to Rwenya, Sango Border Post to Crooks Corner, Rusitu to Muzite Mission, Sheba Forest to Leacon Hill and Burma Valley can be assumed to be reasonably accurate, and thus it can be concluded with certainty that no detailed technical survey will be necessary (with the exception of the Cordon Sanitaire in the Crooks Corner – Sango Border Post minefield, which is not recorded, but is known to exist). What would be required though is to confirm the accuracy of available information on these mined areas through a limited general survey. The mined areas of Lusulu, Mukumbura and Rushinga all require more detailed technical survey but the figures provided in this request are based on reasonable analysis of the data available.

9. Unfortunately, due to the lack of funds as well as other factors, Zimbabwe was not able to accomplish the survey work it had intended to carry out during the initial extension period and was obliged to submit a second request for extension of a period of 24 months which was granted at the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties. The above results from the analysis of the core data formed the basis for this second extension request.

10. Over the course of the previous extension request Zimbabwe has continuously carried out clearance work in the mined area of Sango Border Post to Crooks Corner and Kariba. By 31 March 2014 a total of 101.775 square kilometres of Zimbabwe's mined areas have been cleared with 208 970 anti-personnel mines having been destroyed and it has been established that a further 13.93 square kilometres can be removed from the list of suspected areas for other reasons. Zimbabwe still has 208.88 square kilometres of land contaminated with anti-personnel mines and UXOs continue to be recovered.

11. The remaining 208.88 square kilometres is composed of 9.16 square kilometres of cordon sanitaire minefields and 199.72 kilometres of Ploughshear or reinforced Ploughshear. The terrain in some of these areas is mountainous and rocky thus making access to the minefield and employment of some of the demining equipment very difficult. Some of the areas have been affected by soil erosion as there are gullies while others are swampy or prone to flooding. In addition, there are areas that are thickly wooded or with hard clay surface which is hard to work on. All these characteristics as well as extremely high temperatures in some of the mined areas have the potential to significantly affect demining operations and have to be considered in planning.

12. These land release activities have been carried out through full clearance. Following the total clearance of a particular minefield, a quality control/quality assurance team carries out inspection of the cleared area. Commercial deminers in the past have used a combination of mechanical clearance and standard manual demining techniques followed by an independent external quality assurance process. Military deminers use standard demining techniques, followed by an internal quality assurance process. Currently clearance of mined areas is being undertaken by military engineers with funding from the Government. HALO Trust and NPA have commenced survey and demining and some meaningful progress has been recorded on the survey.

13. Unfortunately, although things have progressed, Zimbabwe has not been able to carry out its Article 5 commitments it set in the past three requests for extension due to the following:

(a) Inadequate funding for demining from the Government: The economy is depressed and constrained as a result of factors such as illegal economic sanctions. Zimbabwe is unable to access funds from multilateral institutions to revitalise the economy. The Government has numerous pressing commitments to meet with the little resources available.

(b) Insufficient demining equipment: As alluded to above, the Country does not have funds to purchase the expensive demining equipment furthermore the demining equipment is imported from countries which imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe.

14. Since March 2012 to 31 March 2014, the ICRC provided training in Demining Management to Senior Engineer Officers, a train the trainer course on humanitarian demining and survey for junior officers, QA/QC, EOD Level 1 and MRE. Furthermore the ICRC facilitated the training of medics on the use of medical trauma kits. The ICRC has also procured equipment to support the equipping of a limited survey capacity and to improve the efficiency of Zimbabwe's demining capacity including personal protective equipment, demining tools and Medical equipment.

15. During the second and third extension period and through the signing of MOUs with the HALO Trust and NPA, Zimbabwe put forward efforts to accelerate survey and demining efforts by allocating specific areas for survey and clearance by these organizations as follows:

1	Musengezi to Rwenya	HALO Trust
2	Sango Border Post to Crooks Corner	National Mine Clearance Unit
3	Rusitu to Muzite Mission	NPA
4	Sheba Forest to Leacon Hill	NPA
5	Burma Valley	NPA
6	Rushinga	HALO Trust
7	Lusulu	National Mine Clearance Unit
8	Mukumbura (Encirclement)	National Mine Clearance Unit
9	Kariba	National Mine Clearance Unit

16. During the third extension period, Zimbabwe and its partners intended to carryout annual milestones and commitments. To date, the following milestones have been achieved:

(a) The National Mine Clearance Unit managed to clear an area of 679 857 square meters recovering and destroying 9 950 anti-personnel mines during period March 2012 to 31 March 2014. The Unit managed to clear the Kariba SHA in June 2013 covering 0.6 square kilometres and destroying 210 Improvised Explosive Devices.

(b) The Zimbabwe National Mine Action Standards (ZNMAS 01) were approved as a legal document with effect from 1 July 2013. All mine action organisations have started operating basing on these standards.

(c) The NPA Mine Action Programme has conducted non-technical and impact assessment surveys in the three minefields namely Sheba Forest to Leacon Hill, Burma Valley and Rusitu to Muzite during the period 12th November 2012 to 31 March 2014. Currently they are conducting technical survey and clearance of the Burma Valley minefield where 69 549m² has been cleared recovering and destroying 43 X M969 mines. Clearance is in progress and the task is expected to be completed in July 2014 at the current operational strength and work rate. From the non-technical survey, the depth of the minefields averages 100m instead of 400m as previously assumed.

(d) HALO Trust commenced survey in August 2013 and has surveyed 203.3km frontage from Mukumbura River to Kahira Mountain. From data collected to date, the average width of the Cordon Sanitaire is 30m and Ploughshear Field is 61m which translates to a significant reduction from the 400m width previously estimated. This entails that the actual contaminated area is less than officially recorded although it is too early to conclude that. From their current rate of progress, it is envisaged that they will complete survey by end of September 2014 and submit the final survey report in October 2014. HALO Trust commenced clearance on 11 November 2013 and up to 31 March 2014 they had cleared an area measuring 43 383m² recovering and destroying 709 anti-personnel mines.

(e) A Troop from National Mine Clearance Unit assigned to clear the Mukumbura encirclement which is part of the Musengezi to Rwenya minefield cleared an

area of 10 850 m² and destroyed 44 Anti-personnel mines from December 2013 to 31 March 2014.

17. A lot of benefits will be realised in humanitarian, economic, social and environmental aspects in the endeavour to fulfil the work to be carried out during the requested period. This will allow for more land to be relieved of mines thereby creating more room for greater opportunities. Business opportunities in areas of agriculture, tourism, mining, game ranching and industrial sites would be realised over the period. On the social aspect, local inhabitants will freely access their water sources, have ample grazing land for their domestic animals and travel across lands to visit their relatives without risking their lives and limbs. In such a situation, investors would be much more willing to make business in a mine free land.

18. Zimbabwe has gone through a lot of challenges in her efforts to fulfil her Article 5 obligation. There has been no assistance rendered to the Country for the past twelve years and the Country could not import any demining equipment. Our National Mine Clearance Unit troops have been able to undertake limited clearance. This though has made very little impact on the significant degree of mine contamination throughout the country. We have failed to meet our Article 5 obligations during the last three extensions granted to us as a country due to among others lack of support and financial constraints. The coming on board by the ICRC, the HALO Trust, and NPA and with HALO and NPA already conducting operations, there will be significant impact on the Country's endeavours to eradicate the mine problem currently faced.

19. With ongoing survey still not complete and analysis of the information and with little time to gain experience since our last request, Zimbabwe is requesting a three year extension until 1 January 2018. It is expected that in the following years Zimbabwe will gain a clearer picture of the remaining challenge as well as good idea of what progress will be possible once partners are at full capacity and other possible partners and donors find a way to support Zimbabwe's mine action program and its partners. This request of extension of the deadline up to January 2018 is as a result of the previously requested extensions not realising any meaningful progress owing to reason already alluded to above. This time around, there is hope that the intended goal can be achieved following the coming in of the ICRC, HALO Trust and NPA. Following the process of survey, retraining and consolidation of resources by our deminers and the work by the two international demining organizations (the HALO Trust and NPA), Zimbabwe is confident that it will be able to embark on clearance of mined areas based on a clear and effective plan for the final removal of all remaining minefields as required under Article 5.

20. Objectives to be reached during the extension period include the following:

(a) 2015:

- Clearance of 1,232,000 square meters (432,000 square meters in Musengezi to Rwenya minefield, 550,000 square meters in Sango Border Post to Crooks Corner minefield, and 250,000 square meters in Rusitu to Muzite Mission minefield).
- Develop National Strategic Plan on the basis of survey results.
- Offer an update of clearance plan to Meeting of the Standing Committee and MSP in 2015.

(b) 2016:

- Clearance of 1,280,000 square meters (432,000 square meters in Musengezi to Rwenya minefield, 550,000 square meters in Sango Border Post to Crooks Corner minefield, and 300,000 square meters in Rusitu to Muzite Mission minefield).

- Offer an update of clearance plan to Meeting of the Standing Committee and MSP in 2016.

(c) 2017:

- Clearance of 1,504,000 square meters (554,000 square meters in Musengezi to Rwenya minefield, 600,000 square meters in Sango Border Post to Crooks Corner minefield, and 350,000 square meters in Rusitu to Muzite Mission minefield).
- Offer an update of clearance plan to Meeting of the Standing Committee and MSP in 2017
- Submission of new clearance plan.

21. It is expected that the activities over the three year extension period will cost a total of US\$ 12,965,125 with US\$ 2,875,000 to be provided by the Government of Zimbabwe and US\$ 10,090,125 to be provided by the international community through partner organizations.
